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ABSTRACT

A sample of 1533 freshmen entering the University of Maryland, College Park during the fall 1975 was analyzed to develop this profile of demographic data, educational and vocational objectives, personal and social issues and services, and attitudes toward university and social issues. (JMF)

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

College Park, Maryland

A PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK, FRESHMEN, 1975-1976

Alice A. Handley and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 9-75

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Summary

The profile below was compiled from the responses of a sample of N-1533 freshmen entering the University of Maryland, College Park during the Fall, 1975. The sample was 51% male, 47% female. The entire entering class numbered 5577. They earned mean SAT scores of approximatelye 460 Verbal and 500 Math and 68% of them reported a B average in high school. More than three-fourths of them were white and 6% were black.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: The typical student has lived in Maryland for the past five years or longer (59%) . He/she is equally likely to be seeking a bachelor's degree (32%), an M.A./M.S. (33%) or a Ph.D./professional degree (33%). The student has had work experience (89%), earned less than $1000 during the past year (57%), and expects to work part-time while seeking a degree (71%). The incoming student expects to be a commuter (62%) (34% will live in University residence halls and another 4% in Sorority/Fraternity houses).

EDUCATIONAL-VOCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: The student disagreed with the statement, "Our country should place less emphasis on working hard (61%). His/her current educational objectives are making a career decision (16%) and/or learning skills applicable to a career (50%). The most likely reason for obtaining a degree is a vocational reason (71%), even though the University is viewed primarily as a learning facility (47%). The student expects to be interested in counseling services related to educational-vocational and reading and study skills (45%). He/she does not anticipate changing majors while in college (51%), and prefers to choose an already established major rather than design his own (43% agree, 41% neutral). 74% of the students disagreed with the statement, "I would not go to college if I could get an equally good job with just a high school education."

PERSONAL-SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVICES: The incoming student views budgeting time wisely (23%) and studying efficiently (21%) as the most difficult adjustments to college life, and responded positively to the statement, "I sometimes feel anxious about succeeding in college," (86%). Almost half (49%) of the sample agreed that they were concerned about financing their education, one quarter was neutral and one quarter disagreed. Freshmen reported that friendships made (23%) and social contacts and activities (24%) have contributed most to their personal development in the past year. The freshmen expect to participate in extra-curricular activities, primarily sports (39%) if male, and music, arts, publications or volunteer work (44%) if female. Few view working (2%) or commuting (4%) as a deterrant to such participation.

ATTITUDE TOWARD UNIVERSITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES: The University of Maryland was the student's first choice of school (64%), and he/she chose to come because it offered an academic program of interest (32%), was economical (26%), or because of its geographical location (23%). The freshmen felt that the most important current issue for society to resolve is the economy/inflation (34%).

The 1975 entering class of the University of Maryland, College Park numbered 5577. They earned mean SAT scores of approximately 460 Verbal and 500 Math. More than three-fourths of the entering freshmen were white and 6% were black. The University sponsored an orientation program for incoming freshmen during the summer of 1975. As part of the orientation, the University Student Census (USC) was administered by the Counseling Center to a sample of 1533 of the incoming freshmen. Fifty-one percent of the respondents were male and 47% female. This profile was compiled from their responses to the USC.

Demographic Data

Fifty-nine percent of the 1975 incoming freshmen have lived in the State of Maryland for the past five years or longer. Twenty-eight percent lived in one or two other states or countries during the five years preceding their entrance to the University; with the greatest percentage of these students entering the behavioral and social sciences. Only one percent of the sample expects to obtain less than a bachelor's degree; 32% expect their highest educational goal to be a B.A.; 33% the Master's degree; and of the remaining one-third, 12% intend to obtain a Ph.D., 11% a medical degree, and 6% a law degree. More men than women (men 14%, women 11%) expect to get a Ph.D. and professional degrees are aspired to by men more than women at a ratio of 2 to 1 (medicine: men, 15%, women 7%; law, men 8%, women 4%).

Students report that their fathers were the most influential other person in making the decision to attend Maryland (38%) and were more important in men's choices (43%) than women's (33%). Mothers were the next most important "other" (22%) and were more important in women's choices (28%) than in men's (16%). Only 9% state that high school counselors were the most influ-

ential other person in making this decision. Forty-six percent of the sample made the decision to enter Maryland during fall or winter of 1974, 32% in the spring of 1975, and 4% during the summer of 1975. Women (65%) made the decision earlier than men (58%)(based on decisions made prior to spring of 1975). Fifty-three percent of fathers of students and 29% of mothers have college degrees. Another 17% of fathers and 20% of mothers have had some college work. Nineteen percent of fathers and 42% of mothers were reported to have a high school diploma. Sixty-seven percent of the students did not expect their parents to attend orientation, while 26% reported that their parents would become involved.

An overwhelming majority of the sample had had some work experience prior to entering college. Only 11% report no earnings in the past year. One in four report earning $100-$499, another 26% earned $500-$599, and 31% earned over $1000. Men report greater earnings than women, particularly in the over $1000 bracket (men 39%, women 22%). Students with highest incomes are more likely to be majoring in engineering. Most students plan to continue part-time jobs while getting their degree. Only 29% have no job and are not looking for work. Twenty-seven percent are looking for jobs; 28% work 19 hours a week or less; and 12% work 20 or more hours per week. Of the 48% of the students working, 11% make more than $50 per week, 17% earned between $30-$49, 10% earn $20-$29, and 6% earn less than $20 per week. Of those earning $50 per week or more, the ratio of men to women is two to one.

Forty percent of the students live with parents or relatives; 13% live off-campus, sharing a room, apartment or house; 34% live in University residence halls and another 4% in fraternity or sorority houses. More women (41%) than men (28%) live in University housing. Twenty-seven percent of the

sample live fewer than 10 miles (one way) from campus and 21% expect to travel 11-50 miles (one way) to school. Of these prospective commuters, men (55%) outnumber women (44%).

Women report better high school grades than men. Of the 19% of the students reporting A averages, 23% are women, 16% men. There are no sex differences in the 68% of the sample reporting B or B+ averages, while men outnumber women two to one in the 12% reporting C or C+ averages.

Attitude Toward the University and Social Issues

Seventy-one percent of this sample either agreed or strongly agreed that they expect to feel a sense of identification with the University. Most of the sample chose the option "Offered the kind of academic program I am interested in" when asked the main reason they decided to attend the University of Maryland. Twenty-six percent reported "relatively inexpensive" and another 23% gave "geographic location" as their primary reason. There were no appreciable sex differences in response to this item. Sixty-four percent stated that the University was their first choice of schools, another 20% listed it as their second choice, and only 3% reported that Maryland was their last choice of school.

These students see the major function of the University as a general learning facility (47%), with women (50%) marking this response more often than men (43%). Thirty-two percent view the major function of the University as developing personal and social skills, and 12% see the role of the University as preparing people for jobs.

Forty-nine percent of the sample is neutral about the role of the University in recruiting black students. Twenty percent agree or strongly

agree that the University should actively recruit blacks, with women (23%) holding the view more often than men (18%). Journalism majors (37%) and human ecology majors (35%) hold this view more strongly than other majors. Twenty-nine percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item, with men (36%) out-numbering women (24%), and students in engineering (40%) more negative than other majors.

When asked for the best way for the State to provide for higher education for both blacks and whites, 39% reported "let things happen naturally," with men (43%) more in favor than women (35%). Twenty-four percent chose the option "improve black colleges" and 15% responded to the option "other."

Ninety percent of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that they expect the University to provide opportunities and facilities for creative activities on campus.

Forty-eight percent of the incoming freshmen believe the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the State. Men (51%),more than women (44%), hold this view, with journalism majors (58%) and education majors (54%) more positive than other majors.

When asked "What is the most important issue for society to resolve?" this sample chose the following options: 34% economy-inflation (men, 31%; women, 37%), with majors in business management and allied health marking this item more often than students in other majors; 19% ecology-polution; 12% racism; 11% other; 9% energy crisis; 9% integrity of those in power; and 3% drug abuse.

While 77% of the sample reported no physical handicaps, 66% responded that the best way for the State to provide higher education for handicapped individuals was to have "well-developed special services and facilities on all campuses" (men, 60%; women, 72%). Sixteen percent chose the option

"to relegate services to one major campus," and 7% said "send them to out-of-state schools at state expense."

With recent legislation outlawing sex discrimination in institutional athletic programs, we would expect to find differences in attitudes among men and women, and this was borne out by this sample. Forty-seven percent said the best way to handle the allocation of men and women's athletic funds is "to compare what other schools do and use that as a guide for change," with women (55%) marking this option more often than men (40%). Twenty-five percent of the sample marked the "other" category, so we don't know what they think, and 17% said "leave things as they presently are," with men (26%) marking this option much more frequently than women (8%).

Sixty percent of the sample disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are "confident in the social and economic health of the country today," women (63%) disagreeing more often than men (58%). Only 16% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with men (19%) out-numbering women (12%).

It seems that the Protestant Work Ethic still reigns supreme among this freshmen sample. Sixty-one percent disagreed that the country should place less emphasis on working hard, with men (65%) more adament than women (57%). Only 13% agreed with this item.

Educational-Vocational Issues

Students in this sample (50%) list learning skills directly applicable to career goals as their most important current educational objective (men, 55%; women 44%). More than 60% of engineering and journalism majors made this selection. Another 16% report "deciding on career goals" as their most important. Students in general studies chose this response more often

than those in other majors. Twelve percent marked the option "independent thinking and behavior" (men, 9%; women 15%).

When asked the most likely reason to stay in school to achieve a Bachelor's degree, 71% of the sample gave a vocationally oriented response (i.e., only way to enter chosen job, 33%; to enter professional school, 20%; graduates get better jobs, 14%; graduates earn more money, 4%). Men (73%) chose these options more often than women (68%). In comparing the response to this question with the response on the question dealing with the major function of the University (where 47% stated they viewed the University primarily as a learning facility, 32% said to develop personal-social skills, and only 12% marked the option "to prepare people for jobs"), we hypothesize that this seemingly dichotomous view may be tapping different levels of need or awareness on the part of the student. That is, idealistically the University is seen as providing general learning and self-development, but pragmatically they expect to be trained for a career, improve their chances for obtaining a job and increase their earning capacity.

In looking at important factors effecting long-term career choices, 20% marked "working with people" as the most important motivation, with nursing, allied health and education majors marking this option more often than other majors. Sixteen percent chose "intrinsic interest in the field" as a response to this item, 15% indicated "job openings and rapid advancement," 15% chose "contribution to society," and 11% chose "high anticipated earnings " (selected most often by business and engineering majors).

Only 11% of the sample stated they were not interested in counseling service, while 36% were interested in educational-vocational counseling and another 45% in reading-study skills. There were no sex differences.

When asked if they were likely to change major fields of interest while at the University, 18% agreed, 30% were neutral and 51% disagreed. There were no sex differences.

In response to "Would you go to college if better jobs were available to high school graduates?" 74% said they would choose to go to college anyway (men, 72%; women, 78%). This item also seems to be an interacting item with the items concerning the function of the University and the reason for obtaining a degree. Students in this sample expect job preparation, but they also expect personal development as well.

In examining the specifics of curriculum, 45% of the sample was neutral to women's study programs (with women, 54%, more so than men, 37%). Sixteen percent agreed that they will probably participate in this program while at the University (women outnumber men 7 to 1). When asked about taking a black study course, 41% remained neutral (men, 37%; women, 44%), 32% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed, and 14% agreed or strongly agreed. Women were both more positive and less negative than men, and engineering majors (65%) were more negative than students in other majors. When asked if they would like to design their own majors as opposed to selecting a major already set up by the University, 48% of the sample preferred to select an already established major. Fifteen percent said they would prefer to design their own. (See Exhibit 1 for a summarized visual display of some of the above)

Personal-Social and Service Issues

Twenty-three percent of the sample sees budgeting time wisely and 21% studying efficiently as the most difficult adjustments to college life. Men (23%) are more concerned with studying than women (19%), and 11% are most concerned with selecting a major or a career.

When asked "What contributed most to your development in the past year?" 47% reported friendships made or social life. Fifteen percent reported job experience, with nursing and business majors selecting this response more often than others. Nine percent reported independent study or research (selected most often by engineering and journalism majors) and 7% marked contact with teachers or counselors. This tends to support much research that contends peers are a more important influence on students in college than teachers or subject content (Feldman & Newcomb, 1972).

Expectations concerning extra-curricular activities show considerable sex differences. Twenty-seven percent of the sample selected intramural or intercollegiate sports as the campus activity of greatest interest to them; men made this response to a much greater degree than women (men 39%, women 15%). Of the 23% who selected "special interest groups," there were no sex differences. Fifteen percent selected music or dramatic arts (men, 13%; women, 18%). Thirteen percent indicated their greatest interest was student publications (men 10%, women 16%); 6% chose volunteer services (men 2%, women 10%); 4% responded "political interests (no sex differences); 3% selected "religious activities; and 2% reported "departmental subject matter."

When asked "Do you plan to participate in intramural sports?" 49% agreed; but the choice was overwhelmingly favored by men (men 63%, women 35%). Thirty-five percent of women reported no interest in sports as compared to 15% of the men.

Eighty-six percent of the sample agreed that "I sometimes feel anxious about succeeding in college," (with no sex differences), 9% were neutral and 4% disagreed with this statement. Almost half of the incoming freshmen (49%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were concerned about financing

their education, with one-quarter neutral and one-quarter disagreeing.

Only 2% of this sample participated in the Student Health Insurance Plan. This is probably due to the fact that 71% participate in private personal or family plans; although 17% stated they were not sure whether they were covered under any plan.

The transportation problem was explored. Regarding bus service from downtown Baltimore, 65% of the sample was neutral, while 30% agree such a service should be provided. Women (34%) are more in favor than men (25%). When asked about bus service from downtown D.C., 53% were neutral, 25% agreed, and 16% strongly agreed. Again, women (50%) were more in favor than men (34%). Only 34% of the sample was neutral about bus service from the major suburbs to campus. Sixty-three percent agree or strongly agree that they would like this service (men, 60%; women, 67%).

Forty-eight percent of the sample agreed that they would be willing to pay a mandatory fee for an all-over campus shuttle bus service, 30% were neutral, and 21% disagreed. Women (51%) were more in favor of this service than men (44%).

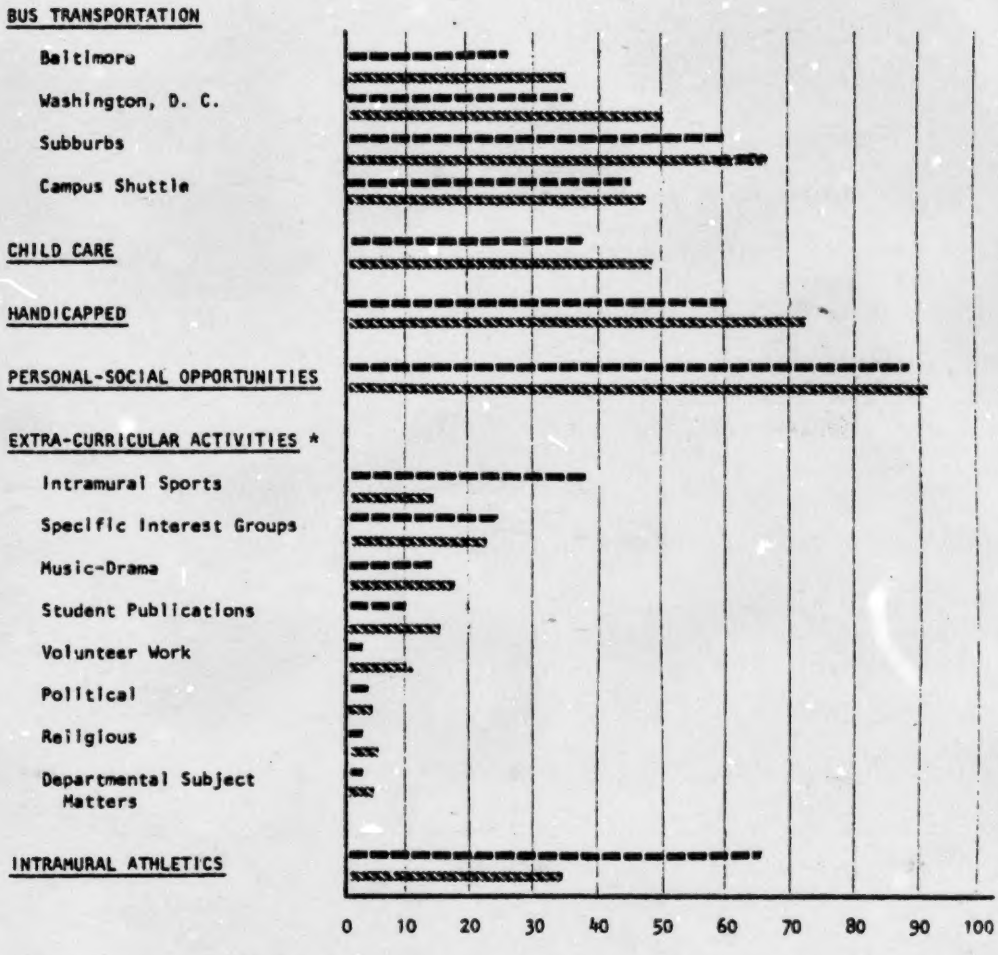
Many students were neutral (47%) about a Day Care Center for children of students; however, 43% agreed, with women (49%) more in favor of this service than men (37%). Only 9% disagreed (there were no sex differences). (See Exhibit 2 for a summarized visual display of some of the above).

Reference

Feldman, K.A. and Newcomb, T.M. *The impact of college on students.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

EXHIBIT 1

1975 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND INCOMING FRESHMEN'S EXPECTATION OF CAMPUS SERVICES



* Students asked to mark the most important choice only.

EXHIBIT 2

EDUCATIONAL-VOCATIONAL CONCERNS OF MARYLAND INCOMING FRESHMEN 1975